What we're dealing with here is a small unrepresentative group. They set aside the entire democratic process and try to get what they want by physical means ... I hope there will be no more resistance, because the road has the full authority of democracy, and any attempt to disrupt it is therefore an attack on democracy

Stephen Norris, Minister for Transport in London (1994)[2]

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The Politics of Anti-road Struggle and the Struggles of Anti-road Politics:

The Case of the No M11 Link Road Campaign

Through the passionate creation of conditions favourable to the growth of our passions, we wish to destroy that which is destroying us.
- Ratgeb (1974)

1. Introduction

This article was originally written in the summer

gloss, with its talk of 'inclusion' and 'stakeholding', reflecting perhaps an even greater emphasis than the Tories on imposing alienated labour on everyone. The 'Welfare to Work' programme is a ruthless and well-resourced attempt to bring the

calism, channelling it into the useless dead-end of alienated (representational) politics, rather than functioning as some kind of 'transitional demand'. (See the point below about 'use' of the media operating as an appeal to the very ideas we want to subvert.)

[17] Another argument which assumes the legitimacy of the democratic process is the suggestion that 'our argument is with the Department of Transport, not with the police or security guards'. Again, while this is true at one level, the problem of it is that it seems to accept that the police and security are just some kind of neutral layer. But of course, both groups protect the sovereignty of private property and state capital, so they can't be neutral. Moreover, to say that our argument is simply with the DoT not the people on the ground in a way flies in the face of the very raison d'être of direct action - which is to intervene on the ground. This is why so many people in the No M11 campaign spent so much time disputing with the construction workers and security. The argument seems to reduce direct action merely to publicity-seeking when it ought to be environment-changing and self-changing in its own right.

[18] One example is the question of the physical appearance of No M11 campaigners. Although it was recognized that the good burghers of Wanstead would like campaign participants better if we all wore suits instead of scruffy clothes when we invaded work sites, people involved in the campaign felt that this was not a price worth paying!

[19] There is an important distinction between the public silence within the campaign about theft and criminal damage (discussed earlier) and this issue of an acceptable public image. The first refers to our relations with the police, and was driven by practical (legal) considerations; the second refers to our relations with the mass media and was driven by ideological considerations. Hence the former was more a matter of tacit agreement and individual decision within the campaign (as 'common sense'); and the latter was agonized over and consciously decided upon by groups representing the collective as a whole.

[20] A version of this section appeared originally in 'Kill or Chill? Analysis of the Opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill' in *Aufheben* 4 (Summer 1995).

[21] The concept of 'proletarian subjectivity' has nothing to do with the miserable questions generated by sociology and cultural studies about the attributes, tastes and norms of those in manual occupations, and everything to do with Marx's distinction between a class in itself (its objective relation to capital) and a class for itself (the class's recognition of its objective relation to capital and hence itself as a class).

[22] The complexities and contradictions of DiY-fluffy ideas and practices merits a lengthier analysis - for example, tracing the changing nature of DiY-fluffyism before and after the CJB became law. But this is beyond the scope of the present article. See 'Kill or Chill? Analysis of the Opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill' in *Aufheben 4* (Summer 1995).

[23] See the article 'Solidarity with the Liverpool Dockers: Why Our Movement Should be Involved', available from Earth First! Action Update, Dept 29, 22a Beswick St, Manchester M4 7HS. See also the Reclaim the Streets article in Do or Die 6, c/o South Downs EF!, Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY.

[24] See the critical appraisal of this demo in the spoof news-sheet Schnooze.

[25] Of course, the new Labour Government shows a slightly different ideological

ing off-the-shelf ideologies. These ideologies are grounded in, and function to reproduce, the very social relations we wish to overcome: the social relations of alienation, exploitation, state oppression, meaningless and soul-destroying work, endless economic expansion and everyday misery. In other words, the social relations of capital.

2. 'Politics' intended and unintended

2.1 Roads and capital

The anti-roads direct action movement in the UK can be said to have begun with the struggle over the building of the M3 extension in Twyford Down, Hampshire, in 1991-2. Both this campaign and that at the M11 extension in north-east London served to make roads into a political issue for many people for the first time. But, whereas 'rural landscape' issues were to the fore at Twyford, the M11 was an urban development scheme, and so raised issues of housing, pollution and use of 'community' space. This engendered a politicization among participants and onlookers on a greater scale and of a broader quality ('social' as well as 'natural') than occurred at Twyford.

However, it is not as if roads were non-political before they became a topic of national controversy. Roads have always been deeply implicated in the maintenance of class relations. In the first place, capital - as both a national and a supra-national subject - requires an efficient transport system in order to move raw materials to factories, and to move finished products to retail centres where they can be sold. Commodities need to be moved about, usually over long distances, to have their value realized in the realm of exchange.[5] In order to compete with other capitals, each transport system must be continually upgraded. Hence the attempt of the various states that make up the European Union to constitute themselves into a sin-

gle viable economic entity in order to compete with other blocks requires a transport system allowing quick, efficient movement across the whole continent (and between this block and others). And hence some of the major road 'improvements' taking place in the 1990s have been part funded by the European Union as part of developing the Trans European Route Network.

In the second place, we need to explain why modern capitalist states have come to prefer roads to rail networks. There are a number of reasons, but the basic element behind the growth of roads is the status of the motor industry as a key locus for expansion. The car is still the pre-eminent consumer product. Quite

circulation time being that period when capital is not sucking the blood out of its human prey by putting them to work.

[6] 'Not-In-My-Back-Yard'

[7] See, for example, Edward Balls, 'Growth and Greenery can Still be Friends', *The Guardian*, 1.8.94, p. 11.

[8] Estimates for the policing cost alone for the 15-month campaign were put at £200 million. However, the signal-workers' dispute cost the same amount to business in just 19 strike days over 5 months!

[9] Costs to capital and the creation of a climate of resistance are of course bound up; there will be no climate of confrontation with capital unless there is at least some threat to capital's reproduction of itself.

[10] The contrast between such a form of life and the way we tend to conduct most other types of struggle is clear, for example, by comparison with the poll tax struggle. In our fight against the poll tax, we had meetings, riots, prison pickets, bailiff

because the very category around which this book is compiled - 'DiY culture' - serves to obscure the connections and possibilities which our actions anticipate.[26] Culture is the hook with which journalists and academics are trying to recuperate our struggles.[27] There is a world of difference between attempts, whatever their limitations, of people involved in struggle to reflect on it, to theorize their practice, and the efforts of academics and journalists to write about such movements. Whether hostile or sympathetic, as expressions of the fundamental division of labour in capitalist society - that between mental and manual labour - these specialists in writing and in ideas are forcing a praxis that is escaping this division back into it. For those of us engaged in the collective project of getting out of this world and into the one we all feel and know is possible, a critique of the category of 'DiY culture' and the recuperative project which lies behind it is becoming imperative.

This article can be found on Aufheben:

http://www.geocities.com/aufheben2/index.html

[1] *Contributions to the Revolutionary Struggle Intended to be Discussed, Corrected and Principally Put into Practice Without Delay* (London: Elephant Editions, 1990), p. 12.

[2] *New Musical Express*, 4 June 1994, p. 6.

[3] Thanks to Mike Edwards and Paul Morozzo for comments on the earlier version of this article. For further material on the issues covered here, see 'Auto-struggles: The Developing War Against the Road Monster' in *Aufheben* 3 (Summer 1994).

[4] For more on our 'intellectual heritage', see the Editorial in *Aufheben* 1 (Autumn 1992).

[5] The circulation of commodities has very different imperatives than the movement of goods would have in a world oriented to human needs instead of profit. For capital, commodities are essentially locked-up value, which must be realized as soon as possible. This need to free the value contained in commodities is not a neutral need for 'efficiency', but the need of capital to minimize circulation time -

derstand their own problems in global terms - which in turn has given them a greater feeling of legitimacy. This whole process has snowballed as different groups around the country have taken encouragement from each others' actions.

In moving away from NIMBYism, many of the participants in the M11 struggle characterized their action as essentially moral or essentially environmental. However, while individuals may be motivated by their personal values, the M11 struggle is not explicable as a 'moral' issue because it is not a simple opposition of good versus bad. The reason that the planners, the state, the contractors and so on attempted to impose the road is not because they are 'evil people'; it is because they were acting in the service of capital that they are 'bad', not vice versa. Only if this is taken into account can we understand the logic of what they are trying to do. Why, for example, did the UK government not implement all of the Rio declaration on global warming etc.? Not because John Major was stupid or lazy or malicious (though he may be all those things), but because the UK government feared quite rationally that UK capital would lose competitiveness in the short to medium term if such changes were made.

The struggle cannot be comprehended adequately as being essentially 'environmental' either. In the first place, the struggle against the M11 link road has highlighted many issues which people recognize as essentially social; some participants were motivated by the threat to the 300 houses on the route of the road rather than the destruction of trees and green spaces. There is a deeper point here also: 'the environment' or 'nature' is not some separate and distinct realm, to be contrasted with a separate social or political realm. 'Environmental' and social issues are actually aspects of the same whole; the struggle over the environment reflects our (human/social) needs for green areas, health and resources. We are part of nature, and there

is no struggle outside human needs and desires.

Given that a purely moral or a purely environmental perspective is inadequate for understanding the significance of the M11 campaign, we therefore need to find another framework. In left and radical politics - in the broad sense - there are two dominant frameworks in which the struggle against the M11 link road might be understood: Labourism & Leninism (the traditional left) on the one hand, and, on the other, eco-reformism.

2.3 Traditional organized politics

To the traditional left, whether Labourist or Leninist, most struggles (such as the attempt merely to stop a particular road, or even the whole roads programme) are understood a priori principally as locations for the recruitment of individuals to a 'revolutionary party' (or even a Parliamentary one) which is thought by its supporters to be the real agent for the real struggle which actually takes place at another location and at another time.

But many ostensibly reformist struggles of whatever nature, depending on how they are fought and their historical context, may become revolutionary in their own right. Particular struggles, such as those of the new anti-roads movement, may connect themselves to each other as part of a practical critique of the whole capital relation, even if their immediate conscious aims are more modest. Such struggles may be both valid in their own right (i.e. satisfying our immediate needs as opposed to those of capital), and point directly to a higher level of struggle; a victory may create new needs and desires (which people then feel confident to set about satisfying) and new possibilities (which make the satisfaction of these and other needs and desires more likely), and so on.

Eco-reformism takes many forms, but is typically characterized by a naive faith in the ultimate tractability of democracy. Thus the Green Party has proposed a

of proletarian revolution, Stalinism crushed the May Days in Spain. Direct action, self-activity, autonomy: features of the class struggle that always posed a threat to the left's representation of the working class; tendencies that it has had to crush or discredit whether they appeared in Berlin (1918), Barcelona (1937), Budapest (1956) or Brixton (1981).

By successfully imposing its definition of class on the graves of revolutionaries, social democracy and Stalinism spawned the 'counter-culture' and 'new social movements' - the struggles of those who didn't conform. The left asserted the primacy of class; those who felt that they didn't fit in with the left's definition asserted the specificity of their own needs. But the left's definition went unchallenged. Thus those who did not wish to reject the question of class entirely merely appropriated it as a category of oppression - that afflicting the manual worker - alongside those afflicting women, blacks, gays, animals or the environment, an eclectic approach forever implying fragmentation and the impossibility of real unity.

The counter-revolution of 'neo-liberalism' and the fall of the Berlin Wall have significantly altered the parameters of our struggles, however. Stalinism is dead and social democracy in retreat. The way is open for a redefinition of class politics that can embrace what the left suppressed, and allow the ghosts of past revolutions to guide us from our nightmarish slumbers. But the forces which have seen off the left have also fragmented our class. With the working class defeated and divided, recent struggles, particularly those referred to in this book, have struggled for class consciousness.

The appearance of the present article in George Mackay's book *DiY Culture* is a contribution towards that process of developing class consciousness, to be read by those who have engaged in these struggles and who seek to go beyond their limits. As such it may sit uneasily alongside some of the other articles. This is

a tree, tunnel or squatted house if you have to go out every day to work to get your means of subsistence. The JSA and related measures represent an attack on that grant and hence on an activist 'career'. More RTS activists have therefore been more ready to recognize the necessity of defending the activist grant through collective action against the state.

However, it has to be said that neither RTS nor any other anti-roads campaign has made the JSA a central focus. A vital opportunity has therefore been missed to forge a practical, everyday unity in antagonism to capital, not only between the different aspects of the anti-roads movement but between the movement and the rest of the working class as a whole. In the absence of such a practical unity, fragmentation predominates.

The anti-roads movement served to smash what the then Government boasted was 'the biggest road-building programme since the Romans'. By causing disruption and disorder, refusal and resistance, campaigns of direct action against road-building rendered roads a political, and deeply controversial, issue. In the face of wider economic pressures, it then became easier for the Government to make cuts in this area: the legitimacy and inevitability of endless road-building was no longer assured. The national roads programme is now dead, therefore, but the future of the dole is not yet settled. While there are still people keen to fight and so much to struggle over, there remains the possibility of overcoming the present fragmentation and reclaiming our class unity in practice and hence perhaps in theory.

5. Postscript

'In the beginning was the deed'
(Slogan of the revolutionaries taking to the streets of Germany in November 1918)

In the name of the working class, social democracy drowned the German revolution in blood. In the name

no-growth capitalist economy, and recent commentators have suggested that capitalism and 'greenery' are compatible.[7] Arguments for tractability or compatibility are based on the observation that certain green battles have been won, and that certain green indicators (e.g. relative absence of sulphur dioxide air pollution) have been known to co-exist with growth.

But although particular battles may be won through reform, the whole war will not be won this way since to stifle the hydra-head of capital in one direction is to have it popping up somewhere else. Imagine, for example, that the anti-roads movement was so successful that it not only prevented all new roads being built but permanently closed many existing ones. Without a concerted attempt to deal with the growth-needs of capital from which the mania for roads issued, our lives would be ruined in other ways - by a massive growth in information technology, railways, air transport, even canals! For example, in Holland and Belgium, opposition is less over roads than over railways which, due to the high level of industrialization and development over there, are taking up the few remaining green spaces.

What both leftist and eco-reformist positions have in common is that they both look outside ourselves and our struggles for the real agent of change, the real historical subject: leftists look to 'the party' while eco-reformists look to Parliament. By contrast, and despite some of the material and comments put out in the name of the No M11 campaign, by adopting direct action as a form of politics, those of us involved in the No M11 campaign looked to ourselves as a source of change.

2.4 The No M11 campaign as an existence of thoroughgoing struggle

Having rejected other political interpretations, we now turn to the actual practice of the No M11 struggle

to develop our own perspective on its political nature.

Participants' expectations of what counts as success in the struggle against the M11 link road shifted over the duration of the campaign. Particularly after the fall of Wanstonia (February 1994), fewer and fewer people believed we could stop the M11 link road being built. But people were prepared to continue this long war of attrition because they could see that the delay and money the campaign cost the construction companies and the Government (through the occupation of squats, invasions of sites and other actions) were having some impact on the ideas of many people and on Government priorities.

However, compared to even a traditional Labourist struggle, such as the signal-workers' dispute which occurred at the same time as the M11 campaign was at its height, the amount of money the campaign cost the Government is actually small fry.[8] Therefore the key to the political significance of the No M11 campaign lies less in the immediate aims of stopping this one road and in the immediate costs incurred to capital and the state (although these are great achievements and great encouragement to others), and more in our creation of a climate of autonomy, disobedience and resistance.[9]

The different acts of creation and resistance that comprise the No M11 campaign were more-or-less coherently related as part of a conscious collective project. What made them radical, subversive and potentially revolutionary was the fact that the various particular acts were intended and functioned as parts of a whole way of existence, a day-to-day existence of thoroughgoing struggle.[10] Much of the significance of this day-to-day existence of struggle lies in the fact that a certain way of life is required to maintain the capitalist system: a life of discipline and conformity, with expression limited to purchasing power. In order to create the wealth necessary to maintain itself, this system re-

ple from signing on - such as the distance of the camp from dole office. Yet there also seems to have been a tendency for the A30 campaign to attract the very people who need the dole yet don't (wish to) recognize their own dependence on - and hence antagonistic relation with - the state as a social force. This was perfectly encapsulated when two of the A30's media stars were challenged on TV about their eligibility for the dole. The recent changes to the dole, in the form of the Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA), make more explicit the duty of the claimant to be 'actively seeking work'. When the interviewer pointed out, rightly, that by spending all day down tunnels they were not seeking work, they proudly responded that they didn't need to sign on because they were very resourceful. Even if it were the case that most people at the camp were not signing on (which we doubt), their response was a terrible cop out; it accepts rather than challenges the logic of work-based rights and duties institutionalized by the JSA, and it implies that there are viable individual solutions to the problem of the new, harsher benefits regime. The JSA is essentially an attack on the whole working class, intended by its Tory makers to bully claimants to accept low paid jobs (on pain of losing all their benefits) and to force them to compete with those already in work, thereby driving everyone's wages down.[25] Individual 'solutions' to this are no solution at all: are we all supposed to sell beads at festivals or go busking? Assuming that we've all got the talent to make beads and busk or whatever, such activities would soon parallel the official labour market they seek to avoid, as the drop-out entrepreneurs fight to compete.

By contrast, more of those involved in RTS have been ready to recognize the dole as the 'activist's grant'. As right-wing commentators correctly deplore, direct action campaigns against roads have benefited from a population of activists on the dole, on site and available for struggle 24 hours a day: you can't defend

therefore came to support workplace struggles against capital, such as the strikes by the signal-workers and tube-drivers - as evidenced by the banner on the 1995 street party in Islington and the RTS-related Critical Mass 'picket' of London Transport in August 1996. The latest development is the link RTS has made with sacked Liverpool dock-workers. Many were heartened by travelling troublemakers from RTS boosting the dock-workers' presence in a mass picket-cum-occupation in September 1996.[23] This was followed by the 'Social Justice' demo, called by supporters of the sacked dockers, which was organized to coincide with one of the street parties, which was hoped, again, to disrupt one of London's main arteries.[24]

The tactic of tunnelling as opposed to mere barricading to hold up evictions on anti-road camps was first used at Claremont Road but reached a wholly new level of ingenuity and dedication at the A30 protest. In the demands tunnelling makes on activists, and in the effectiveness of such tactics in delaying the eviction and the smooth functioning of capital and the transport infrastructure, the A30 struggle was undoubtedly radically anti-capitalist in its effects. But whereas a significant tendency in RTS has pursued the trajectory of anti-capitalist consciousness which burgeoned at the No M11 campaign, the A30 campaign has seen the resurgence of some of the worst features of liberal ideology that flourished at Twyford but which were superseded to some degree at the No M11 campaign. Where there has been a tendency for those involved in RTS to talk of the state, capital and class, there was an equal tendency among A30 activists to romanticize trees and to evoke mysticism.

The contrast between the two faces of the current anti-roads movement is perhaps best illustrated by their respective reactions to recent changes to the benefits system. Certainly, there were practical imperatives at the A30 campaign operating to discourage peo-

quires that most of us live in accommodation that we pay for, that we pay for our food and clothing etc. (and that, as individual purchasers, we aspire to more and better housing, clothes etc. etc.) - that we therefore carry out wage-labour in order to pay for all these things. In order to maintain itself, capital also requires that those who do conform perceive the lifestyles of those who don't as unattractive and precarious.

The way of life adopted by many of us in the No M11 campaign was the very reverse of this - and points to the way a whole society could live. However, this alternative, subversive form of existence wasn't born of idealism but of immediate practical requirements.

2.4.1 Squatting

Day-to-day struggle was not a free choice, but rather a function of the fact that the campaign was over a large road in whose path lay a number of houses, trees and other green areas; the best way to defend these was obviously to occupy them and live in them collectively. The importance of squatting as a tactic in the radicalism of the M11 struggle was vital, binding together as it did daily life with offensive resistance: living on the route of the proposed road allowed easier intervention in the building of that road! Moreover, a situation without the dull compulsion of rent, work, bills etc. provided the basis for creating and re-inventing a community, which, in turn, encouraged other ideas.

Squatting is itself a tremendous act of resistance as well as a material necessity. But we went beyond mere squatting and made the campaign into a more thoroughgoing struggle, and not only through our incursions into
construction sites. We went beyond squatting as lifestylism first by barricading our squats, second by taking over the street itself in Claremont Road; and, finally, and as part of taking over the street, we made it into our actual living space - rejecting in effect the imposed

division between the privatized domain of the householder and the 'public' (i.e. traffic-dominated) thoroughfare.

2.4.2 'The pixies': devalorization and a u t o - v a l o r i z a t i o n

Parallel to squatting were the many acts of damage and theft that went on against the link road at night (and sometimes in broad daylight). Equipment, materials, structures, offices, vehicles, fences and machinery at link road sites were damaged all the time, sometimes by a large crowd who would outnumber security and disappear when the police arrived, but more often by small groups who operated out of view of security. This added massively to the costs incurred by the construction companies. Even better, lots of material was stolen from link road sites and other sites in the area. This material, such as fencing, was then used for our purposes, such as barricading. This process had a beautiful roundness and economy about it: turning the enemies' 'weapons' against them! In devalorizing these materials from capital's point of view, we re-valorized (or autovalorized) them from our own.

For very practical reasons, these kind of activities were not widely discussed within the campaign, let alone mentioned in public pronouncements (press releases, leaflets, pamphlets, interviews etc.): to admit to theft and damage is to ask to be arrested. This led to a rather one-sided, anodyne picture being received in some quarters of what the campaign was about and what people in the campaign actually did. So much had to be secret, even within the campaign. People involved in the campaign simply couldn't go around saying that the campaign's continued existence as a semi-permanent site of resistance depended crucially on theft.

was also one of proletarians who had reflected their relative atomization in their liberal arguments now reflecting the extent to which it had been overcome in the collective activity of rioting: Bourgeois ideology and the active negation of bourgeois society as dialectical opposites within the same individual subjectivity.

4.2 Reclaim or retreat?

The anti-roads movement came together over the No M11 campaign. Events at Wanstead and in Claremont Road were treated as a national focus for struggle. Even those who hated being in the city and professed to care more about trees than about houses defended the buildings of Claremont Road; and people who were concerned essentially about the 'political' aspects of the road (lack of consultation, destruction of a 'community') defended green spaces on the route as a necessary part of the campaign.

To some degree, the different tendencies than came together in a practical unity at the M11 have now come apart. Despite the overlap in personnel, and the range of positions within each campaign, such struggles as the Reclaim the Streets (RTS) campaign in London and the recent campaign against the A30 in Devon display certain crucial differences overall.

Reclaim the Streets events have taken place in many towns around the country, but the London street parties have undoubtedly been the largest and most subversive. Certainly, this is the view of the police, who felt that the ante was upped at the street party in July 1996 when a pneumatic drill was used to dig up the M41 and plant trees. What is even more worrying for those in authority, London RTS has made conscious and practical links with other struggles not previously regarded as connected to the anti-roads movement. Reclaim the Streets wanted to attack not just road-building but the way of life associated with it; RTS activists located this way of life as part of capital. They

terms.

On the other hand, no such modification can be expected through the world of DiY culture. The collective experience of the rave, simultaneous movement to a pre-determined rhythm with spontaneous outbreaks of cheering or mass hugging, offers the illusion of unity but, once the 'E' has worn off, leaves the individual little closer to becoming a social individual with meaningful bonds than before. The experience of defending a rave against the police, on the other hand, does lend itself to the development of proletarian subjectivity;[21] but our 'fluffy friends' do not seem to have involved themselves with this most positive aspect of the rave scene, preferring the 'positive vibes' of versions of paganism, Sufism, Taoism or some other mysticism.

The failure to recognize the need to overcome the atomization of individuals through collective struggles in which they can become social individuals becomes, not a failure, but a virtue in the world of DiY. As a result, the liberalism of the fluffy is far worse than that of any of its predecessors.[22]

Fluffy ideologues attempted to police both the reality and the image of the CJB campaign, but certainly didn't have it all their own way. On the final demo against the CJB, in October 1994, conflict between crowd and police generalized such that hundreds if not thousands who came to the demo with fluffy intentions found themselves rioting - or at least cheering the rioters on. For hours, people held the park, despite the best efforts of the cops, who were hilariously pelted with missiles at each one of their ineffective charges. Those in the crowd had time to look around and reflect, identifying friends and familiar faces beneath hoods and masks; and it became clear that this crowd was demonstrating that the contradiction between a class position and liberalism was not simply one of different people - 'militants' and 'liberals' - with different ideas. It

2.4.3 Communal life

Those staying at Claremont Road attempted to live communally in many ways. Many of the houses were shared, and there were communal meals, although a degree of semi-commercial organization also operated in the form of the street cafés. People experimented with different ways of relating to each other and organizing. Some of the limits of what can be done communally reflected the problem of new people or outsiders coming in who can't be trusted. The campaign was very open, but the disadvantage of this was that it made it easy for spies and infiltrators to gain access. The only solution to this was not so much to close up but to expand and generalize the struggle.

2.4.4 Free activity: reclaiming 'time'

Some indication of the threat our mode of existence posed to the stability of the mainstream was given by the fact that many people who had relatively well-paid jobs in the construction industry preferred to 'work' with us rather than for a wage. Without doubt, we were nowhere near successful enough in appealing to such people. But nevertheless, we must have been doing something right when so many carpenters and other skilled workers came to 'work' for hours on end to take part in the barricading and related construction work that went on in Claremont Road.

2.4.5 Reclaiming Space

People took over the tarmac of the street itself, and only part of it was open to vehicles. We tried to ensure that security guards occupying part of the end of the street did not use it to park their cars; rather, any parking spaces were reserved for our people. One of the elders of the campaign initiated the closing of the main part of the street to traffic by building artworks on the actual tarmac. These works of art were made from

objects in the natural and artificial environment: tree stumps, chains, bicycle parts etc. This was followed by the turning of the street itself into a 'living room' by using the furniture, carpets, fittings and other objects from some of the houses on the street to make actual rooms on the street. Each had its own character. These rooms did not simply operate as art - they were functional as living spaces. This came to be seen as a deliberate echo of (idealized) pre-car communities where children could play in the street, neighbours socialize etc. without fear of being knocked down. As more objects filled the street, and more people took over the road, Claremont was also becoming a virtual no-go area for the police. In the early days, a local sergeant would patrol regularly and knock down the artwork each time he went past. But eventually he stopped going down the street at all. At the time, we felt we had excluded the police through our own numbers and power etc.; but in fact part of it was that the police were being diplomatic. When they deemed the time to be right they came in when they wanted - as on the 2nd of August when four of our houses were evicted and demolished with the aid of riot police. Throughout, however, people led the police to believe that all the artwork and other objects in the street were easily movable, but in fact many of them were cemented into the street, or filled with earth and rubble so they could function as barricades.

In sum, this daily existence of thoroughgoing struggle was simultaneously a negative act (stopping the road etc.) and a positive pointer to the kind of social relations that could be: no money, the end of exchange values, communal living, no wage labour, no ownership of space.

3. Contesting the communal identity

Many of the themes of the No M11 struggle resonate with those found in the writings of the Situationist Inter-

By far the majority in the movement, however, were young unemployed who had no material interest in obscuring class divisions. But this very position of unemployment reinforces the apparent truth of liberal ideology, as the claimant exclusively inhabits the realm of circulation and exchange (rather than production), experiencing only one facet of capitalism. Many in the movement relate to money only as the universal equivalent, as purchasing power, not as the face of the boss. Their income is not payment for exploitation as a component of a collective work-force, but apparently a function of their individual human needs.

Whilst the claimant's pound coin is worth every bit as much as that of the company director, the quantitative difference in the amount they have to spend becomes a qualitative one that becomes recognized as class inequality, especially if the claimant has not chosen the dole as a preference, has family commitments, or lives in a working class community. But 'young free and single' claimants who have chosen to be on the dole, particularly if they have never worked, more so if they come from a middle class background, and if the housing benefit pays for a flat in an area shared by students, yuppies and other claimants alike, and especially if the higher echelons of a hierarchical education system have increased their sense of personal self-worth, will tend towards the one-sided view of the world they inhabit that is liberalism.

Such a tendency is, of course, transformed by experience. For the individuals who engage in the collective struggles of, say, anti-roads protests, there is the possibility of moving beyond liberalism towards a critique of capitalism. To the extent that such activities remain the domain of dedicated 'cross-class' minorities, however, it is more likely that a liberal viewpoint will be retained in the modified form of militant liberalism - i.e., an approach which takes collective action against the state but which still fails to understand the state in class

men in suits that they really had nothing to fear: that beneath the dreadlocks and funny clothes, strange ideas and new-fangled music, the marginalized community was really made up of respectable and honest human beings making a valuable if unorthodox contribution to humanity. The way forward was to overcome prejudice by demonstrating to the rest of society their reasonableness and 'positivity'. Thus in comparison to the liberalism of the pacifists, fluffyism is characterized by being not only fundamentally unconfrontational, but also supposedly apolitical. As the purpose of the campaign was to provide itself with a positive self-image, the representation became more important than that which was to be represented. Attracting media attention and getting 'positive coverage' became the be-all and end-all of the campaign as far as the fluffies were concerned. Indeed, were it possible to get positive TV coverage of a demonstration without the hassles and risks involved in actually having one, the fluffies would no doubt have done so. The fluffy is the situationists' nightmare come true, the rarefied thought of the post-modernist personified - virtual politics.

4.1.2 Liberalism and social positions

The influence of fluffy ideology within the CJB campaign can be understood by a closer examination of the current positions of the fluffies themselves within capitalist society. The CJB was an attack on marginal elements rejecting the conformity of the 'traditional working class'. Within the Bill's scope, therefore, including as it did a clamp down on unlicensed raves, were hippy entrepreneurs who had a material interest in adopting a liberal position of defending freedom (to make money in their case, to dance in fields etc. in the case of their punters); adopting a class position would expose the tensions between those who sell and those who always buy, the personifications of the opposing extremes of commodity metamorphosis.

national.[11] Their concerns with pleasure, humour, critique/satire of consumerism, 'self-realization' and 'wholeness' are all captured in the opposition 'life versus survival'.[12] Survival may actually be no more than a living death of wage-labour, money, routine, bureaucracy, boredom, the state, the police, consumption, town planning, bourgeois discipline etc. Survival may also be to varying degrees of comfort; but however comfortable, it does not correspond to the spontaneity, love, creativity, humour, comradeship, commitment, risk-taking and leaps into the unknown of living. Survival is merely existence within the purposes of an alien and parasitic power; living is the very reverse of this - it is the negation of this encroaching power through conscious, joyous resistance.[13]

As well as sharing some of its strengths, the No M11 campaign fell down in some of the places where the situationists fell down also. A critique of alienation in the realm of consumption and 'everyday life' is necessary, but what about an adequate analysis of commodity production? Those in the No M11 campaign did not produce such an analysis, not because, like the situationists, they thought that capital has solved some of its contradictions.[14] Rather they didn't think about capital at all, except incidentally. Towards the end of the campaign, more people thought more often about their own activity as a form of antagonism in relation to capital and the state. But, generally, the campaign's theories remained inadequate to its practices; and into this gap of theory dogma often stepped - usually liberal dogma, reflecting both the middle-class backgrounds of many within the campaign, and the nature of the campaign itself, which fitted uneasily into the traditional image of class struggle.

Participants in the No M11 campaign clearly shared an identity, an identity which was deeply political, whether explicitly understood in relation to capital or not. However, the nature of the campaign's politics

was sometimes the subject of intense internal struggles. Dogmas did not always go uncontested. Two controversial issues in particular stand out from the Claremont Road period: the question of non-violence; and the arguments over how the free space was created and maintained.

3.1 'Fluffing it?'

3.1.1 Just how non-violent was the campaign?

For some people in the No M11 campaign, non-violence was not simply a tactic appropriate to certain situations, it was a principle to be applied to all situations. Yet even those who professed to be principled 'fluffies', or adherents of ideological non-violence, were not always consistent. Violence was used within the campaign - reluctantly - to exclude people from Claremont Road. And many who thought of themselves as fluffies would admit that in some situations they would use physical force against another person in order to protect themselves. Clearly, unless they are willing to use the same force to protect their comrades they are guilty of not only hypocrisy but also of selfishness and

place in the No M11 campaign. Importantly, however, whereas at the No M11 campaign there was consensus, more or less, over the necessity for non-violence (if not the rationale for it), in the anti-CJB campaign there was no such consensus; and indeed the struggle over methods became quite bitter at times. The 'spiky' counter-offensive, not only against the CJB but also against the domination of 'fluffy' ideologues, forced the latter to develop and make explicit their arguments in order to defend their position more robustly. This has therefore enabled us to look more closely at the nature and social conditions of 'fluffyism', which we show here to be an expression of the worst kind of liberalism.

4.1.1 The world view of the fluffy

Many who went on the national demonstrations against the CJB may be under the illusion that the fluffies are simply the pacifists of the 1980s re-emerging from the woodwork. There are however important differences between fluffyism and the pacifism of the old peace movement. Pacifists at least recognized the state as a social force of violent coercion that

didn't actually hinder other activities), and more people joined in the barricading - albeit intermittently. Even though some of those expelled were a menace to others, there was also a recognition among some people that there was an element of scapegoating in the response to the lunch outs. For one thing, drinking alcohol was an unreliable indicator of doing nothing and parasitism. For another, the apparent do-nothings were part of a vital reserve army of resistance in the event of big evictions. They also helped maintain our control of the street at night, simply by being there, in the face of encroachment of space by security, and did other things to make the street 'ours' that may have gone unnoticed by the hard-core barricaders (such as some of the 'pixieing'). Moreover, since few on the street were 'always working', the quasi-hysterical revulsion against lunch outs was in some ways a reflection of dilemmas within each of us. Such questions as "am I doing enough?" and "am I spending too much time taking drugs?", instead of being problematized themselves for being leftovers from old-style work-discipline, became displaced onto an obvious target.

4. Beyond the M11

Claremont Road was evicted at the end of 1994. The eviction saw the end of the No M11 campaign in its form as an existence of thoroughgoing struggle. However, other, related, campaigns were just beginning. In this section, we discuss some of these developments, the existence of which allows us not simply to apply the analysis we produced during the No M11 campaign, but to elaborate this analysis further. First, we discuss tendencies within the anti-CJB movement, and second the current state of anti-roads direct action.

4.1 Kill or Chill the CJB?[20]

In the summer and autumn of 1994, the national campaign against the Criminal Justice Bill (CJB) was riven by the same arguments over non-violence taking

practical imperatives behind the campaign's adoption of non-violence.

Given that the work on the road was scheduled to last at least four years, and given that the most effective way to fight it was to have a permanent and visible presence on or nearby the route of the road, able to climb into work-sites and disrupt work, and given also the fluctuations in our numbers, using open physical violence to get past security was not a viable strategy. If, for example, we had the numbers on one occasion to beat the guards in a fight, we would face revenge when we were vulnerable: in our squats or next time we invaded a site when our numbers were low. In fact, in numerical terms we were usually evenly matched with the guards during site invasions, but they were mostly much physically bigger than us. We therefore attempted to operate within certain unwritten rules of play, and we attempted to out manoeuvre the guards within those rules: thus a crowd of us would run onto a site, many of whom expected to be escorted or dragged out by the guards, while a number managed to scale the cranes where the guards couldn't reach them.

There were many complaints within the campaign over 'violence' from security guards or police, and over illegitimate use of arrest and other interventions by police. But there were hardly any use of batons, let alone horses or snatch squads by police at the M11 struggle. Arguably, we were able to carry on our war of attrition because, by and large, we did not appear to up the stakes too much, and so the police often adopted a hands-off approach.

Given this context, it was difficult to argue that non-violence could be dispensed with. On the other hand, on many occasions it was clear that the strategy of non-violence had become written in stone as a simplistic panacea. During the period when a large number of new people became involved in the campaign, for example, there was an occasion when someone ques-

tioned the usefulness of non-violence simply by asking 'What do I do after they've hit me?' Instead of being given a rational argument, he was virtually shouted down hysterically with rhetoric about non-violence. Similarly, some people in the campaign expressed fear that the demo against the Criminal Justice Bill on the 24th of July might not be 'fluffy', as if the tactics of local road protests should automatically generalize to other situations. The tactic of non-violence arises from a position of weakness: it is like people saying 'We are weak and vulnerable; let's capitalize on this by using it as a method!' - appealing to the humanity and sympathy of others (see below). But it simply doesn't make sense to assume we'll always be weak or that the method will work with every different potentially confrontational encounter.

In the struggle against the A36 superhighway just outside Bath, a protester was nearly killed when a tree surgeon apparently deliberately cut the ropes securing him to a tree. After this, protesters took rocks with them into the trees to use in case another such life-or-death situation arose. If methods vary across different anti-roads campaigns, then they will obviously vary across different types of struggle. Non-violence can be very persuasive in certain situations; it can discourage security and police from being more violent than they might otherwise be on certain occasions. But what about when the stakes are raised, when the powers that be think we're being too successful? Police and security on the ground will be under orders not to be disarmed by politeness and non-violence; they will be thinking simply of getting people out the way by any means necessary, and if you can't get away quick enough you will have to try to defend yourself. At the demo against the Criminal Justice Bill on July 24th, a leaflet was distributed advising people that one tactic they might try if the police start getting heavy is to 'lie down and be a doormat'. This advice was naive, inap-

either on the houses they were staying in or in the street as a whole. Windows were tinned up from the inside, attics fortified, doors reinforced, ground floors filled with rubble, and towers built on roofs, and so on.

But if our struggle was simultaneously a fight to live rather than simply a grim, dour attempt to slow the road-building down, then it would have been counter-productive making the houses so well barricaded that they all became uninhabitable. For one person or a small group to devote themselves single-mindedly to barricading is laudable and certainly produced some highly useful defences; but it could also be a kind of self-sacrifice that conflicts with the desire for pleasure. It could also exclude the very people who might otherwise have been defending the house on the day of the eviction.

But if the special ambience of our free space was not guaranteed simply by single-minded barricading, nor was it guaranteed by its opposite - pure hedonism. The tarmac in Claremont Road was full of armchairs and art, enabling a leisured way of existence. But resentment built up among both the hard-core barricaders and others who put a lot of effort into the street. They saw that things needed to be done and that some people were doing nothing and yet enjoying the benefits of the street, such as the subsidized meals. These do-nothings were called the 'lunch outs', and drinking strong lager came to be associated with parasitic laziness, internal violence and making a mess of the street. The solution to this was deemed to be forced expulsion from the street, and during just one month that summer about 20 people were thrown off the street in this way.

Was this a return to a primitive work ethic? The old disciplines of alien bourgeois society re-imposing themselves in the height of the siege? In fact, a level of balance became struck whereby a number of lunch outs came to be more or less tolerated (as long as they

3.2 How was our free space created and maintained?

Claremont Road was a free space. But there were arguments over which activities were claimed to be the most important in creating and maintaining that free space.

A dilemma over 'hard work' versus 'hedonism' was present in the No M11 campaign from the beginning. Again, the dilemma over this question faced by each individual, the arguments and accusations within the collective, and the waxing or waning of a particular emphasis within the campaign reflected the exigencies of the situation itself rather than a purely intellectual debate. Many of those taking part in the campaign did so consciously as part of a whole way of attempting to resist and avoid the dull compulsion of work-discipline, conformity etc. This was certainly true of the Donga-types who were for many people the personifications of the campaign, at least until the Claremont period. Sitting round a tree to protect it was not simply a duty - it was a pleasure in itself. But, particularly when houses were threatened with eviction and demolition, it was necessary to carry out some kind of physical activity in order to slow down the contractors. During the Wanstonia period (January-February 1994), when a block of Wanstead houses was defended, the question of whether the barricading should be total as opposed to selective was a source of persistent and heated argument. The same argument was revived in Claremont Road.

In Claremont Road, barricading was never assiduously done by everyone on the street. Instead, there was a hard-core crew of barricaders who worked incessantly (often inside the houses where no one could actually see them) and a large pool of more occasional barricaders who worked on particular projects,

propriate and dangerous. The forces of the state will wipe the floor with 'doormats'!

3.1.3 Non-violence as part of democracy

A second rationale for non-violence arises from its heritage. Linked as it is with all the historical baggage of campaigns to gain civil rights, the strategy of non-violence was articulated within the No M11 campaign on a number of occasions as a way of bringing us more into the democratic fold. The demand was made that our non-violent protest be recognized as 'part of the British democratic tradition', that we should be able to exercise our 'rights', and that non-violent direct action be seen as a necessary part of citizenship. NVDA was said to be legitimate because it is consistent with certain principles in the law. Organizations allied to the No M11 campaign, such as Alarm UK, Road Alert! and the Freedom Network made explicit the ideological linkages, citing the suffragettes as an example and precedent for such integration and inclusion. Michael Randle, the well-known peace campaigner, in his recent book on civil resistance,[15] follows the philosopher Ted Honderich and the sociologist Sheila Rowbotham in seeing certain forms of protest such as non-violent direct action as enriching rather than challenging democracy.[16]

But let's be clear about this. What they refer to by the term 'democracy' is the alienated politics that got us in this mess in the first place. Do we want to see this system achieve full ascendancy - with a bill of rights to make explicit the guarantee of our paltry 'freedoms' in exchange for our duty to obey a law which maintains the dull compulsion of capital - or do we want something better? In the No M11 struggle, many of the activities we took part in or witnessed are not at all part of the miserable democratic exchange of representation, rights and duties; they went far beyond this, and were both adequate and satisfying in themselves.[17] These actions point to a type of social form which embodies

freedom in a way that democracy simply cannot. Honderich and Randle might regard such activities as roadblocks, barricading, site invasions etc. as 'ultimately good in the long run'. But what about resisting arrest, criminal damage and theft in the fight against the road? What about generalizing what we did to tube-fare dodging? These don't and cannot enrich democracy - they can only subvert it - and so much the better for that.

3.1.4 'Use' of the mass media

The importance of non-violence became consolidated in the beginning of the No M11 campaign because it was good for public relations: a lot of 'respectable' residents got involved because they liked non-violence as a moral position. They were concerned with the campaign's image in the mass media, thought to be the determiner as well as the reflection of (middle class) public opinion. A concern with getting ourselves into the media continued, although many people became cynical about this through their experiences of the press.

Of course we needed to let people (all people?) know that a force of active opposition existed to the road. But this should not be conflated with relying on the needs of the mass media to disseminate our message. The problem with relying on the mass media is that of colluding with the very prejudices you're trying to subvert.[18] The more that people like us get our more 'fluffy', middle class face accepted by the media and the Daily Mail readership, the more we may be agreeing to marginalize our 'darker' side - our clothes and jewellery, opinions and arguments, drugs and language - to send it deeper underground. This is the price of cuddling up to them. If the struggle is indeed about a whole way of life, the aim should be to change or confront 'public opinion', not appease it.[19]

3.1.5 Humanism

Perhaps the most deeply ideological of all the justifications for non-violence was the humanist argument. On one occasion, an experienced eco-campaigner at the No M11 campaign angrily denounced some people on one of our site actions as 'scum' because they had apparently been violent towards some security guards. As already mentioned, the danger of being violent towards security is that, because we were usually relatively vulnerable, such actions put us all at risk. But, on the other hand, to call people 'scum' for fighting security guards displayed an utter confusion. Just who were the 'scum'? The police and private security who attempted to physically impose a road upon us ultimately by any means necessary? Or some people who wanted to resist this process? Our relations with police and more so with security were problematic, changeable and contradictory. But it was naive to argue that the basis of our non-violence towards them should be a kind of humanism. The humanist argument claims that all violence is the same since it is all done to 'human beings'; the argument therefore blurs the qualitative distinction between the violence that maintains alienation and exploitation (i.e. the violence of the state) and the violence which seeks to liberate us from this alienation and exploitation.

Drawing on the humanistic argument, some of Alarm UK's literature evoked the spirit of Rogerian therapy when it invited us to remember that "security guards are capable of change just as much as we are". It is true that security guards are 'human beings too', but they are certainly not 'only human beings'; they are paid to enact a particular role and if they do not do this properly - by being too human, for example - then they will be fired. As Vaneigem says, "It is easier to escape the role of a libertine than the role of a cop, executive or rabbi" (p. 139).